

## **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF**

Government Flying Service (General) Regulation (Cap. 322B)

### **Government Flying Service (General) (Amendment) Regulation 2024**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Secretary for Security, under sections 4 and 18 of the Government Flying Service Ordinance (Cap. 322) (“the Ordinance”), has made the Government Flying Service (General) (Amendment) Regulation 2024 (“Amendment Regulation”) at **Annex A**, to revise titles of the Aircraft Technician (“AT”) grade/ranks of the Government Flying Service (“GFS”) by amending Schedule 1 to the Government Flying Service (General) Regulation (Cap.322B) (“the General Regulation”).

## **JUSTIFICATIONS**

### ***AT Grade***

2. The GFS is supported by four departmental grades, namely Pilot, Air Crewman Officer, Aircraft Engineer and AT. The AT grade is responsible for providing professional inspection, maintenance and repair services for fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, and all other systems, equipment, flight gear and facilities essential to the smooth operation of GFS’ flying services. The AT grade comprises three ranks, namely Aircraft Technician, Senior Aircraft Technician and Chief Aircraft Technician.

### ***Proposal in Grade Structure Review***

3. In March 2019, the GFS Aircraft Technicians Union (“ATU”) made a submission to the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (“the Standing Committee”) for its consideration in conducting a grade structure review (“GSR”) for the disciplined services grades covering seven departments / agencies including the GFS. In the submission, the GFS ATU explained that there has been an increase in complexity of the job duties, level of responsibilities and workload of the AT grade; and proposed, inter alia, that the grade be retitled as “Aircraft Technical

Officer” in the interest of career development. The respective three ranks of the grade are proposed to be correspondingly retitled as follows –

<b>Existing Rank Titles</b>	<b>New Rank Titles</b>
Chief Aircraft Technician	Chief Aircraft Technical Officer
Senior Aircraft Technician	Senior Aircraft Technical Officer
Aircraft Technician	Aircraft Technical Officer

4. The Standing Committee concluded the GSR and published the “Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grade” (‘the Report’) in June 2021 to set out its findings and recommendations which were accepted in full by the Executive Council on 10 August 2021. With respect to the retitling proposal of the AT grade / ranks, the Standing Committee stated in the Report that it is open to the proposal and considers it more appropriate for the departmental management and staff sides of GFS to explore the most appropriate title, as long as the new title would not cause confusion on the roles and carry any pay or read-across implications for other grades.

5. To follow up on the advice by the Standing Committee, the GFS management has carried out further discussions with the GFS ATU to look into the retitling proposal. The GFS management affirms that it is fully supportive of the proposed retitling which will not only truly reflect the professional work and contribution of the AT grade members, but also bring strong unity to the department in its continued efforts to strive for excellence in discharging its duties.

6. After consideration, the Government agrees with the retitling proposal having regard to the following factors –

- (a) *Increased complexity of duties:* In the light of heightening standards and technological requirements in aviation industry, AT grade members have adopted more advanced technology and procedures in their daily duties. This is particularly evident in crucial inspections, preventive maintenance, regular restorations, and defect rectifications. With the use of more sophisticated and complicated equipment and technology, such as dropsonde system for typhoon tracking in fixed-wing aircraft, automatic search/let down/hover system for search and rescue operations in helicopters, AT grade members are facing increasingly complex inspection and

maintenance duties that demand higher level of technical skills and advanced knowledge.

- (b) *More demanding compliance responsibilities:* AT grade members have to comply with more stringent airworthiness standards and requirements promulgated by the Civil Aviation Department (“CAD”), the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (“EASA”), and other relevant statutory bodies in the field of aircraft maintenance compliance, such as the statutory requirements by the CAD regarding the annual renewal of the Certificate of Airworthiness of each aircraft and helicopter, and the Airworthiness Directives issued by the EASA. The maintenance responsibilities of the AT grade have thus become more demanding in terms of both their scope and complexity.
- (c) *Increased workload:* There has been a surge in demand for regular and reliable aircraft maintenance arising from an increase in air medical evacuations, offshore search and rescue operations due to the heavy maritime traffic in Hong Kong waters, and a rapid rise in inshore search and rescue calls due to the growing popularity of mountaineering activities in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the GFS has set up a new operational base at the former Kai Tak Airport runway, as well as a Flight Simulator Training Centre at the GFS Headquarters. AT grade members have to take on additional duties and responsibilities arising from these new projects which serve to enhance both operational and training efficiency. For example, in-depth regular maintenance and system assessment of the flight simulator training device mirrors a real helicopter to meet stringent hardware standards as well as the required aircrew training profiles from civil aviation authorities. All of these have resulted in an increased number of maintenance and inspection cycles and checks, and a greater demand for skilled expertise to perform maintenance and repair duties to a high standard of airworthiness.

7. In view of the complexity of supervision and certification work for the specialised mission equipment, which requires extensive professional knowledge and skills, the GFS has taken measures to enhance the training provided to the AT grade members. In this respect, AT grade members have undergone specialised training and have successfully obtained the additional professional qualifications to fulfil their expanded scope of responsibilities within the department. Apart from raising the pay points and granting

incremental jumps for the AT grade<sup>1</sup> as recommended by the Standing Committee, which were already implemented with effect from 1 September 2021 after seeking approval of the LegCo Finance Committee, it is equally important to amend the titles of the AT grade/ranks to appropriately reflect the professional skills set and expertise together with the expanded roles and more diversified professional responsibilities of AT grade members, as well as to give due recognition to their contributions, enhance their professional image, and boost staff morale. The new title would not cause confusion on the roles or carry any read-across implications for other grades.

## **THE AMENDMENT REGULATION**

8. The Amendment Regulation will amend Schedule 1 to the General Regulation to revise titles of “Aircraft Technician”, “Senior Aircraft Technician”, and “Chief Aircraft Technician” as “Aircraft Technical Officer”, “Senior Aircraft Technical Officer”, and “Chief Aircraft Technical Officer” respectively.

## **LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLE**

9. The legislative timetable of the Amendment Regulation is as follows –

Publication in the Gazette	8 March 2024
Tabling at the LegCo for negative vetting	13 March 2024
Commencement	10 May 2024

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSAL**

10. The proposal is in conformity with the Basic Law, including the provisions concerning human rights. It has no financial, sustainability,

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<sup>1</sup> They include –

- (a) raising the scale minima and scale maxima by one pay point for the recruitment rank and promotion ranks of the AT grade; and
- (b) granting a maximum of two incremental jump to the AT rank who have obtained specified professional qualifications and specified approval / authorisation respectively.

environmental, family, gender, economic, civil service or productivity implication. It will not affect the current binding effect of the Ordinance and the General Regulation.

## **PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

11. We issued an information paper to brief the LegCo Panel on Security about the amendment proposal on 22 January 2024. The Panel did not raise any objection to the proposal.

## **PUBLICITY**

12. A spokesman for the GFS will be available to respond to media enquiries.

## **BACKGROUND**

13. The Ordinance provides for the establishment of the GFS which shall provide flying services to the Government for such purposes as are incidental to the administration of Hong Kong. The GFS shall comprise “Senior Officer” and “Officer” of the designations set by the Secretary for Security. The respective departmental grades and ranks of GFS designated as “Senior Officer” and “Officer” are specified in Schedule 1 to the General Regulation. Accordingly “Aircraft Technician”, “Senior Aircraft Technician” and “Chief Aircraft Technician” are all designated as “Officer” in Schedule 1 to the General Regulation. Corresponding amendments to Schedule 1 to reflect the new rank titles are therefore required to be made for the implementation of the retitling.

## **ENQUIRIES**

14. Enquiries on this brief should be addressed to Miss Stephanie CHONG, Assistant Secretary (Security) A1 at 2810 2302.

**Security Bureau**  
**Government Flying Service**  
**March 2024**

**Government Flying Service (General) (Amendment)  
Regulation 2024**

(Made by the Secretary for Security under sections 4 and 18 of the  
Government Flying Service Ordinance (Cap. 322))

**1. Commencement**

This Regulation comes into operation on 10 May 2024.

**2. Government Flying Service (General) Regulation amended**

The Government Flying Service (General) Regulation (Cap. 322 sub.  
leg. B) is amended as set out in section 3.

**3. Schedule 1 amended**

Schedule 1, under heading “**Officer**”, entry relating to  
“Officer—Engineering”—

**Repeal**

“Chief Aircraft Technician

Senior Aircraft Technician

Aircraft Technician”

**Substitute**

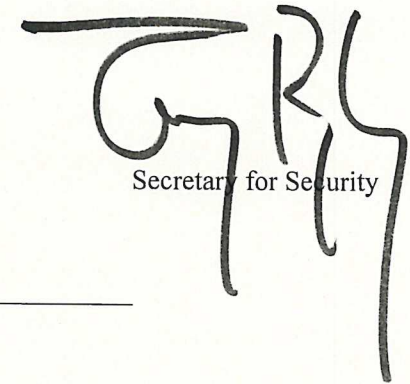
“Chief Aircraft Technical Officer

Senior Aircraft Technical Officer

Aircraft Technical Officer”.

28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024

Secretary for Security



### **Explanatory Note**

This Regulation amends Schedule 1 to the Government Flying Service (General) Regulation (Cap. 322 sub. leg. B) to change the titles of Chief Aircraft Technician, Senior Aircraft Technician and Aircraft Technician to Chief Aircraft Technical Officer, Senior Aircraft Technical Officer and Aircraft Technical Officer respectively.